

NewsLink

19 – 26 April 2020



Churches of North
Bradford on Avon
& Villages

Dear friends

How is our faith this morning? How are we coping with the pressures of daily living, the social distancing, the self-isolation? Some of us will be hating it – desperately missing our families and friends, that physical contact. Others will be loving it. An opportunity for quality quiet times, a chance to paint, to draw, to garden, to learn new skills which we have never had time for.

I wonder if we look back, have we ever been in any of the following situations? Losing one's job or redundancy, empty nest syndrome when children leave home, marriage break-up and divorce or worrying about elderly parents. They might have been really tough times but somehow as Christians we would have known that at some level, God would have been present.

We also know about Jesus and God being the potter and us the clay being moulded. We know about the oyster and how the beautiful pearl is made, because the oyster decides to get rid of the sand that is in its shell, and it starts to make fluid and it has this irritation, and suddenly this beautiful pearl is made. We know these stories, we know God's presence in our minds, but we need to know it in our hearts too.

It might be that we are afraid of the future but let's remember today. We only have today. We have to learn to live one step at a time and then rest in God. Fear can be very debilitating and can poison our inner peace. The coming of the Holy Spirit released the early followers of Christ from their fear and that must surely be our prayer for us as followers today. 'Come Holy Spirit.'

So, what is the anti-toxicant for fear? There are five:

Firstly pray – loads and loads of prayer. Whenever you feel anxious or fearful, turn your eyes to Jesus and pray. If you feel you can't pray, tell someone and they will pray for you.

Secondly **turn to your Bible** and find those passages that remind you that we can know God's peace in all circumstances, that perfect love casts out fear

Play music that moves you, makes you want to dance and worship. Find those CDs you have tucked away of hymns, worship songs, Christmas Carols and sing along to them. Music is a powerful way of lifting one's spirits and worshipping.

A **fear shared** is a fear halved. Pick up the phone and ring someone. Remember you are not alone, and others will be feeling like you.

Finally **hold onto hope** and never let it go. Remember you are a child of God, known and called by name, cherished and loved. You are being prayed for; others are holding you in their thoughts and prayers.

Stay safe and stay well.

God Bless you.

Ann, Rector

Benefice on-line services and resources

The link to this Sunday's online service, the Second Sunday of Easter, is available here – it will take you to the Youtube channel.

https://youtu.be/OlloUw3_n4s

It will also be available on the Benefice website www.nboachurches.co.uk.

Each week we will also publish your photos, Bible verses that have spoken to you, reflections and poems in Newslink or on the website, please continue to send these to Ann Keating.

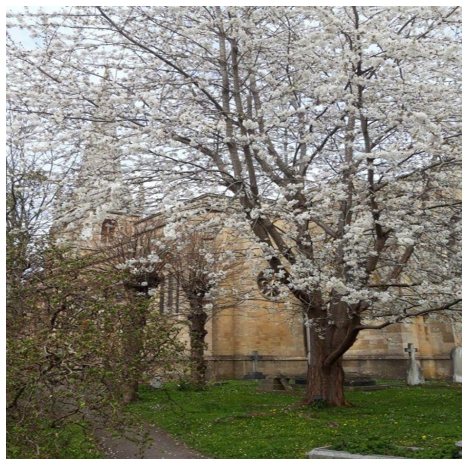
From Alison Wells

' **Christian Aid Week 2020 - 10th-16th May.**

I am sure you will realise that there cannot be a house to house collection this year but, of course, funds are still desperately needed to support their work. St Nicholas' Church has always generously supported the appeal and it will still be possible to make a donation this year.

Full details are being developed for a 'vibrant, virtual CAid week including a digital envelope and a quiz.

I refer you to the website - www.christianaid.org.uk - where there is a link to information regarding 'coronavirus' and ask that you consider what you might be able to do to help even in these difficult times.



Christ Church in Springtime by Gillian Ellis-King



An Easter wreath given to bless St Nicholas by a former NHS worker..

Living Hope – an Easter message from Rev Gordon

The link below gives us wonderful views of the grounds of Lee Abbey and a message of new life from Rev Gordon via Youtube.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KuefTA9C7Zo&feature=youtu.be&mc_cid=f6755896ff&mc_eid=7254c160c5

Funerals

Dorothy Youell, a former resident of Avon Park and a member of St Nicholas Church, Winsley died on Easter Sunday. Her funeral will be held at Haycombe Crematorium on Tuesday 28 April at 14.30. A memorial service will be held for Dorothy in church when possible. Ann will take the funeral.

Jean Branch only moved to the area a month ago to be close to her family and lived at Fitzmaurice Place. Her funeral service will be held at Bradford on Avon Cemetery on Wednesday 29th April 2020 at 12-00pm. Ann will take the funeral.

Please hold the bereaved families in your prayers at this difficult time. Thank you. Ann



From Jean Atkin, The beauty of God's creation, (and Jean's hard work!)

Looking after yourselves...

As we face an extension to the social distancing one useful resource on our website is a link to an article by **Richard Stanton** on '**Coronavirus and your mental health.**'

Malcolm Guite Easter 2020



Like all of us, I have been drawn deeply into this strange Easter when so much of the outwardly familiar has been taken away, and yet the inwardly familiar, the great Easter story of Death and Resurrection, has suddenly been renewed and become more agonisingly close, more vividly relevant to our lives than ever. But, like so many, I am deeply distressed at not being able to gather in church this morning, and to receive communion in community, to meet Christ 'risen in bread, and revelling in wine', as I put it in a sonnet long ago. But this Easter he calls me to discern him in new ways and in different places. He is risen indeed, and if I cannot go to church then where am I to find him? That is the question my new poem seeks to address, and if it is a question you ask yourselves too, then I hope you will find this poem helpful

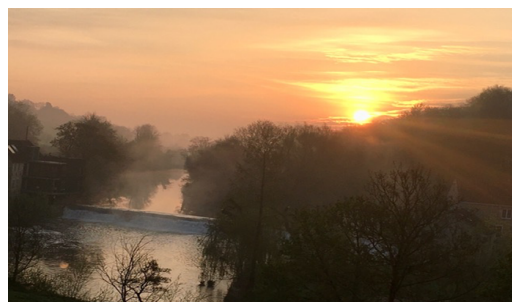
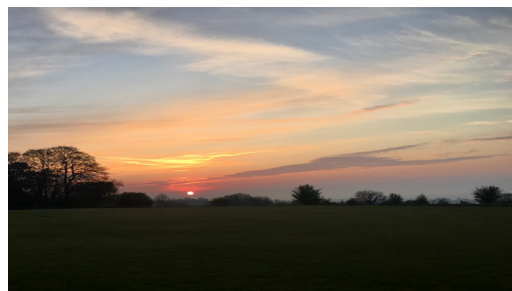
And where is Jesus, this strange Easter day?
Not lost in our locked churches, anymore
Than he was sealed in that dark sepulchre.
The locks are loosed; the stone is rolled away,
And he is up and risen, long before, ...
Alive, at large, and making his strong way
Into the world he gave his life to save,
No need to seek him in his empty grave.

He might have been a wafer in the hands
Of priests this day, or music from the lips
Of red-robed choristers, instead he slips
Away from church, shakes off our linen bands

To don his apron with a nurse: he grips
And lifts a stretcher, soothes with gentle hands
The frail flesh of the dying, gives them hope,
Breathes with the breathless, lends them strength to cope.

On Thursday we applauded, for he came
And served us in a thousand names and faces
Mopping our sickroom floors and catching traces
Of that virus which was death to him:
Good Friday happened in a thousand places
Where Jesus held the helpless, died with them
That they might share his Easter in their need,
Now they are risen with him, risen indeed.

Dawn on Easter Sunday from Cedric Pierce



From Ann, Rector. *Easter Pilgrim* daily reflections on the Church of England website.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/easterpilgrim>



The first line of the Lord's Prayer helps us find our place in the universe despite the chaos and suffering around us and the pain within us. We remember that we are not here by accident or chance, but we are deeply loved children of our maker. You are not alone but connected as God's child with all of humanity. You are part of the church of Jesus Christ. Our Father is indeed in heaven, but this prayer is given to us by his Son, Jesus, who lived and suffered with us and who rose again from death.

Read



Acts 1.1-3

¹ In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning ² until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. ³ After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over the course of forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

Reflect



In the early Church, most candidates were baptized at Easter. In baptism, we die with Christ and rise again to the joy of new and eternal life with God.

The Church celebrates Easter for 50 days: 40 days between Easter and Ascension and then 10 more days looking forward to Pentecost and the gift of the Spirit.

In this Easter season, the Church gives to the newly baptized all that we need to grow in faith and to live a good and fruitful life. One of the most important of those gifts is the Lord's Prayer.

Many today learn the kingdom prayer by heart as children, but then never understand its meaning as adults. In the early Church, new Christians would be taught the prayer for the first time just after baptism as one of the great mysteries of the faith. Come to the Lord's Prayer in this season with fresh eyes and in the joy of Easter.

Pause



Remember the earliest time you heard and used this prayer. What does it mean to you?

Pray



Pray the Lord's Prayer slowly and carefully today and each day in the Easter season.

Family challenge



When Jesus' disciples asked him how to pray, he gave them the prayer that begins "Our Father in heaven". We call it The Lord's Prayer. Over the next few days, try to learn this prayer by heart. If you already know it, look online. Can you learn the Lord's Prayer in another language or in British Sign Language?

Spring Harvest Home

Spring Harvest is a Christian gathering for all ages, which is normally held over several days at Butlins. This year as it wasn't possible for people to attend in person, Spring Harvest made all the events and materials available free online. This included talks, bible teaching, activities, seminars and worship.

The materials will be available until at least 30th April, videos can be viewed [here](#) or on Youtube at

<https://www.youtube.com/user/SpringHarvest>

There are more resources including downloadable resources on the website:

www.springharvest.org

There are hours of viewing available – do take advantage of the opportunity to dip into these resources whilst we are all staying at home.



Unfortunately, the extension to the lockdown will mean that community events planned to celebrate the VE Day 75th Anniversary on Friday 8th May will not be able to go ahead as hoped. However it is hoped that some aspects of this important anniversary could still take place on 8th May in ways that will allow us to celebrate the VE Day anniversary while following the essential social distancing advice that ensures that everyone remains safe. We will keep you updated with plans as we are made aware of them.

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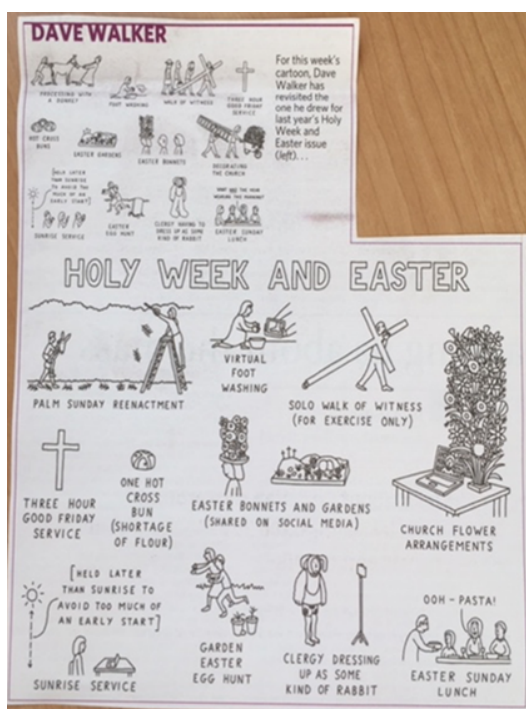
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Cartoons from Church Times

Do check the **website** as resources are added regularly and check Instagram and Facebook for all our latest news.